

CAN THE SOUTH SOLVE THE NEGRO PROBLEM?

BY

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This discussion of the Negro Question by Carl Schurz is of the highest permanent value. Mr. Schurz has had an active share in settling each successive phase of the great question, since the repeal of the Missouri Compromise. He was one of the founders of the Republican Party; he helped elect Abraham Lincoln to the Presidency of the United States; he fought through the Civil War; studied the condition of the South on the ground after hostilities ceased, and was influential in ending military rule there in 1872. There is probably no man living who has a more intimate knowledge of the Negro Question than Mr. Schurz. His paper has the intellectual authority which comes from over forty years' practical dealing with a question by a man of distinguished mind. It has the moral authority which comes only from a man who has never allowed any consideration of policy to obscure the ethical meaning of the question with which he dealt.—THE EDITOR.



IN the recent public discussions of the race problem in the United States, occasional reference has been made to a report submitted by me to President Johnson in 1865.

At the request of the President I had visited the States of South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana for the purpose of studying their condition and of laying the results of my observations before him. It may be profitable at the present moment to recall that condition, inasmuch as thus some light may be shed upon the origin and purpose of the so-called reconstruction measures, to which the gravest of the difficulties prevailing in the Southern country are now attributed.

When I set out on that tour of investigation, only three months had elapsed since the close of the Civil War. The Confederate soldiers had but recently returned to their homes. They found those homes, wherever touched by military operations, more or less devastated, and, in almost every instance, in a greatly neglected if not dilapidated state. During the Civil War the resources of the South had wholly been devoted to the support of the Confederate Government and its armies, and therefore, economically speaking, wasted. The Confederate money in the hands of the Southern

people was absolutely worthless. Want and misery stared them in the face. Their sustenance, for the time being, depended on the crops to be raised that summer. Until then, the plantations had been cultivated by slave labor. But the slaves had been declared free. During the war a large number of the negroes had still remained on the plantations doing their accustomed work. But the complete discomfiture of the Southern armies made the decree of emancipation effective everywhere. Negro slavery had come to a sudden end, and thus the whole agricultural labor system of the South, the only labor system known and believed in by the Southern people, was entirely upset and made inoperative.

It is not surprising that, mortified by their defeat and chafing under the urgent necessities of their situation, the white people of the South should have been in a desperate state of mind—a state of mind eminently unfitted for calm and judicious reasoning, and especially for the solution of problems calling for equanimity and patience. But for this excited state of mind they would perhaps at once have recognized the fact that the emancipation of the slaves was irrevocable, and that the only sensible and profitable course open to the late master class was to accommodate themselves to the new order of things as

best they could and to set the former slaves to work as free laborers, peaceably, in a friendly spirit, and on fair terms. But two things stood in the way. One was a traditional and stubborn prejudice. Wherever on my tour of investigation I tried to discuss with Southern men the immediate problem to be solved, which I did every day, I was constantly met by the assertion: "You cannot make the negro work without physical compulsion." In the language of my report, "I heard this hundreds of times, heard it wherever I went, heard it in nearly the same words from so many different persons that at last I came to the conclusion that this was the prevailing sentiment among the Southern people. There were exceptions to this rule, but far from enough to affect the rule. In the accompanying documents you will find an abundance of proof in support of this statement. There is hardly a paper relative to the negro question annexed to this report which does not in some direct or indirect way, corroborate it. Unfortunately, the disorders necessarily growing out of the transition state continually furnished food for argument. I found but few people who were willing to make due allowance for the adverse influence of exceptional circumstances. By a large majority of those I came in contact with, and they mostly belonged to the more intelligent class, every irregularity that occurred was directly charged against the system of free labor. If negroes walked away from the plantations, it was conclusive proof of the incorrigible instability of the negro and the impracticability of free labor. If some individual negro violated the terms of his contract, it proved unanswerably that no negro had or ever would have a just conception of the binding force of a contract, and that this system of free negro labor was bound to be a failure. If some negroes shirked or did not perform their task with sufficient alacrity, it was produced as irrefutable evidence to show that physical compulsion was absolutely indispensable to make the negro work. If negro idlers or refugees crawling about the towns, applied to the authorities for subsistence, it was quoted as incontestably establishing the point that the negro was too improvident to take care of himself and must necessarily be consigned to the care of a master. I heard a Georgia planter argue most

seriously that one of his negroes had shown himself certainly unfit for freedom because he impudently refused to submit to a whipping. I frequently went into an argument with those putting forth such general assertions, quoting instances in which negro laborers were working faithfully and to the entire satisfaction of their employers, as the employers themselves informed me. In a majority of cases the reply was that we Northern people did not understand the negro, but that they (the Southerners) did; that, as to the particular instances I quoted, I was probably mistaken; that I had not closely investigated the cases, or had been deceived by my informants; that *they knew* the negro would not work without compulsion, and that no one could make them believe he would. Arguments like these naturally finished such discussions. It frequently struck me that persons who conversed about every other subject calmly and sensibly would lose their temper as soon as the negro question was touched."

Of course, the natural impulse of people entertaining such sentiments, and exasperated by their immediate necessities, was to resort to that "physical compulsion" without which, in their opinion, the negro would not work. For this they found, unfortunately, not infrequent occasion in the conduct of a certain number of negroes. In one respect the behavior of the negroes immediately after their emancipation was remarkable. It is probable that some of them had suffered cruel punishments or other harsh treatment while in the condition of slavery; but not one act of vengeance on the part of a negro after emancipation is on record. On the contrary, there were many instances of singularly faithful and self-sacrificing attachment of negroes to their former masters and their families. Neither could they, at that period, be charged with many criminal excesses beyond pig and chicken stealing. But their ideas as to what use they might or should make of their newly won freedom were rather dim and confused. A good many of them, probably indeed, a very large majority, remained on the plantations and continued their work under some sort of contract arrangement with their former masters. But other colored people, a not inconsiderable number, followed the natural impulse of testing the quality of their freedom by walking away from the places

on which they had been held to labor, and by wandering to the nearest town or military post "to have a good time" for a while. Still others made contracts with the planters and then broke them with or without cause. All this and much more of the same sort would, under the circumstances, not have appeared surprising to cool and unprejudiced minds, but rather as the inevitable concomitant of so great a revolution as was the sudden liberation from slavery of several millions of human beings. These were comparatively slight disorders which, if kindly and prudently met, would in a great measure soon have been righted. But against these irregular movements, "physical compulsion," without which, in the Southerner's opinion, the negroes would not work at all, was fiercely put in action. Some planters held back their former slaves on their plantations by brute force. Armed bands of white men patrolled the country roads to drive back the negroes wandering about. Dead bodies of murdered negroes were found on and near the highways and by-paths. Gruesome reports came from the hospitals — reports of colored men and women whose ears had been cut off, whose skulls had been broken by blows, whose bodies had been slashed with knives or lacerated with scourges. A number of such cases I had occasion to examine myself. A veritable reign of terror prevailed in many parts of the South. The negro found scant justice in the local courts against the white man. He could look for protection only to the military forces of the United States still garrisoning the "States lately in rebellion" and to the Freedmen's Bureau—that Freedmen's Bureau, the original purpose of which was to act as an intermediary between the planters and the emancipated slaves, the white and the black, to aid them in the making of equitable contract arrangements, and, generally, in organizing the new free labor system for the benefit of both. It would have been an institution of the greatest value under competent leadership, had not its organization been to some extent invaded by mentally and morally unfit persons. That this imperfect organization and the corresponding failures in its conduct prevented it in so large a measure from accomplishing its object, cannot be too much deplored. For nothing was more needed at that time than an authority standing between the late

master and the late slave, commanding and possessing the confidence and respect of both, to aid the emancipated black man in making the best possible use of his unaccustomed freedom, and to aid the white man, to whom free negro labor was a well-nigh inconceivable idea, in meeting the difficulties which partly existed in reality and were partly conjured up by the white man's prejudice and inflamed imagination.

That the Freedmen's Bureau actually did much valuable service in this direction cannot be denied. It did protect many freedmen against violence and prevailed on many others to abstain from breaking their contracts with white men, and to stay at work. It helped in developing the work of education among the blacks which had been started by benevolent Northern people with admirable energy and self-sacrifice during the Civil War, wherever the national army controlled any district of country largely peopled by blacks. But the shortcomings of the general management of the Freedmen's Bureau, and the ill-suited qualifications of some of its agents and representatives, greatly impaired that moral authority which was especially required for so comprehensive and delicate a task.

The second great difficulty, and of worse effect even than the partial failure of the Freedmen's Bureau, was the precipitate course of President Johnson with regard to the reconstruction of the Southern State Governments. During the Civil War, and even immediately after his election to the Vice-Presidency, Mr. Johnson was one of the fiercest "Rebel-haters." His "loyalty" to the Union was of the most unforgiving, most uncompromising and merciless kind. The burden of his daily talk was that "rebellion was treason and that treason was a crime which must be made odious," that this was to be accomplished by meting out the severest punishment to the instigators and leaders of the rebellion, and that hanging was not too good for them." There seemed to be reason for apprehending that, if Mr. Johnson should come into power, the victory of the Union armies might be tarnished by relentless severity in the treatment of the vanquished. But no sooner had he actually been raised to power by the assassination of Lincoln, than he began to initiate a policy which, if carried through, would have subjected the "States lately in rebellion" almost

instantly and absolutely to the control of the men whom but recently he had denounced as fit for the gallows.

In June, 1865, he issued a proclamation concerning the reorganization of the State Government of North Carolina, some provisions of which were judged by many friends of the administration as somewhat hasty. Letters expressing that opinion were received by the President, and similar criticism appeared in several of the most important newspapers. It was at that time that the President surprised me with the request that I should investigate the conditions prevailing in the Gulf States for him. In the conversations preceding my departure for the South, he designated his North Carolina proclamation, not as the expression of a fixed plan definitely determined upon, but as an "experiment." Before going farther, he "would wait and see" how the proposed method of reconstruction might work practically. But he did not wait and see. He caused it to be generally understood that the "States lately in rebellion" would speedily be reconstructed, their people, meaning the white people, to elect their Legislatures and Executive as well as judicial officers, as before the war. When asked by the Provisional Governor of Mississippi, and other Southern men, for permission to organize the local militia, he readily gave his consent; whereupon the Provisional Governor of Mississippi forthwith called upon "the young men of the State who had so distinguished themselves for gallantry" — meaning of course Confederate soldiers — to respond promptly to this call. The result was that efforts were made to reorganize county patrols which "had already been in existence, and had to be disbanded on account of their hostility to Northern people and freedmen."

The known attitude of President Johnson concerning the speedy reconstruction of the "States lately in rebellion" produced an effect that might easily have been foreseen. The white people of the South might have accommodated themselves in good faith to the introduction of free labor in the place of slavery, in spite of their prejudices and their traditional habits of life, had that introduction been presented to them as a stern and inexorable necessity. A good many of the difficulties standing in its way would have been overcome had the white people become convinced that

there was absolutely nothing else to do. But when they heard that the President was willing, and even eager, without delay to put the entire management of their internal affairs into their hands again, they saw the way open for a sweeping reaction against the emancipation policy. The temptation was irresistible. The conviction that the negro would not work without physical compulsion, grew stronger among them than ever. A little over two months after the close of the war, one of the Provisional Governors admitted that the people in his State still indulged in the lingering hope that slavery might yet be preserved. That lingering hope now spread visibly. In public argument the emancipation proclamation was by hot-headed extremists denounced as unconstitutional and of no force, and this denunciation was frantically applauded by large multitudes. Although the necessity of accepting the thirteenth amendment to the Constitution was generally recognized, it was hoped that it could effectively be neutralized by State and municipal action. Various parishes in Louisiana and municipal bodies in other States adopted ordinances of which provisions like the following, constantly recurring, were characteristic:

No negro or freedman shall be allowed to come within the limits of the town without special permission from his employer, specifying the object of his visit and the time necessary for the accomplishment of the same. Whoever shall violate this provision shall suffer imprisonment and two days' work in the public streets or shall pay a fine of \$2.50.

Every negro is required to be in the regular service of some white person or former owner, who shall be responsible for the conduct of said negro. But said employer or former owner may permit said negro to hire his own time by special permission in writing, which permit shall not extend over seven days at any one time. Any negro violating the provisions of this section shall be fined \$5 for each offense or in default of the payment thereof shall be forced to work five days on the public road or suffer corporeal punishment as hereinafter provided.

No public meetings or congregations of negroes shall be allowed after sunset, but such public meetings and congregations may be held between the hours of sunrise and sunset, by the special permission in writing of the Captain of patrol within whose beat such meetings should take place. This prohibition, however, is not intended to prevent negroes from the usual church services conducted by white ministers and priests. (Fine for violating this provision \$5, or five days' work on the public road or corporeal punishment.)

No negro shall be permitted to preach, exhort, or otherwise declaim to congregations of colored people without special permission in writing from

the president of the Police Jury. (Fine \$10 or ten days' work or corporeal punishment.)

No negro shall sell, barter or exchange any article of merchandise without the special written permission of his employer, specifying the articles of sale or barter or traffic. (Fine \$1 for each offense, forfeiture of said articles or work on the public road or corporeal punishment.)

All the foregoing provisions shall apply to negroes of both sexes.

It shall be the duty of every citizen to act as a police officer for the detection of offenses and the apprehension of offenders who shall be immediately handed over to the proper captain or chief of patrol.

The aforesaid penalties shall be summarily enforced, and it shall be the duty of the captains and chief of patrol to see that the aforesaid ordinances are promptly executed.

Evidently the condition of the person laboring under such ordinances would be, if not slavery in terms, something closely akin to it. Under such a regime the negro, if only temporarily the slave of an individual owner, would always have been the slave of the white people at large. When, as was provided in some of the ordinances, "every citizen," meaning, of course, every white man, was authorized and commanded "to act as a police officer for the detection of such offenses and the apprehension of such offenders," and when such "penalties were to be summarily enforced," and it was put in the power and made the duty of captains and chiefs of patrol to see that the aforesaid ordinances were promptly executed, the freedman in name was little, if at all, better than a slave in fact.

The men who designed and formulated such ordinances, which in a somewhat changed form reappeared in the enactments of Southern Legislatures, hoped, of course, that they would be permitted to carry them out, and they believed to see in President Johnson's attitude excellent reason for that hope. It was not surprising that under such circumstances acts of violence against freedmen multiplied, that the patrols or "militia companies" became more active in capturing stray negroes, and that the reign of terror grew more and more like that of the old slavery times. The only influence which to some extent restrained this violent reactionary movement consisted in the continual presence of the Federal troops who, at that time, were governed by the orders of the War Department under Secretary Edwin M. Stanton. The protection of the freedmen by the Federal forces was, of course, submitted to by the

whites, but in most cases sullenly and with an important mental reservation. With the same mental reservation—a reservation not at all concealed but openly avowed—several things were submitted to, the acceptance of which was known to be necessary in order to bring about the restoration of the Southern States to full control of their local affairs.

On this point I said in my report to President Johnson: "When speaking of popular demonstrations in the South in favor of submission to the Government, I stated that the principal and almost the only argument used, was that they found themselves in a situation in which they could do no better. It was the same thing with regard to the abolition of slavery. If abolition was publicly acquiesced in, whether in popular meetings or in State Conventions, it was on the ground of necessity—not infrequently with the significant addition that, as soon as they had once more control of their own State affairs, they would settle the labor question to suit themselves, whatever they might have to submit to for the present. Not only did I find this to be the common talk among the people, but the same sentiment was openly avowed by public men in speech and print. Some declarations of that kind, made by persons of great prominence, have passed into the newspapers and are undoubtedly known to you. I append to this report a specimen, not as something particularly remarkable, but in order to present the current sentiment as expressed in the language of a candidate for a seat in the State Convention of Mississippi. It is a card addressed to the voters of Wilkinson County, Mississippi, by General W. L. Brandon. The General complains of having been called an 'unconditional emancipationist, an abolitionist.' He indignantly repels the charge and avows himself a good proslavery man. 'But, fellow-citizens,' says he, 'what I may in common with you have to submit to, is a very different thing. Slavery has been taken from us; the power that has already practically abolished it threatens totally and forever to abolish it. But does it follow that I am in favor of this thing? By no means. My honest conviction is, we must accept the situation as it is, until we can get control once more of our own State affairs. We cannot do otherwise to get our place again

in the Union, and occupy a position, exert an influence, that will protect us against greater evils which threaten us. I must, as any other man who votes or holds an office, submit for the time to evils I cannot remedy.' General Brandon has only put in print what, as my observations lead me to believe, a majority of the people say even in more emphatic language; and the deliberations of several legislatures in that part of the country show what it means."

The same expectation served also to embarrass and impede the efforts made for the education of the freedmen. Aside from several honorable exceptions, I found the popular prejudice against negro education almost as bitter as it had been when slavery still existed. Hundreds of times I heard the old assertion repeated that "learning will spoil the negro for work," and that "negro education would be the ruin of the South," and in innumerable instances I discovered symptoms of the amazing notion that "the elevation of the blacks would be the degradation of the whites." The consequence of all this was that, in a large number of places, negro schools could be established and maintained only under the immediate protection of the Federal troops, and that, once the military garrisons were withdrawn, school-houses would be set on fire and the teachers driven off. This opposition to negro schools, too, received a strong impulse from the expectation so much encouraged by President Johnson, that the late slave States would soon again be in unrestricted control of their home affairs, and that negro education, being an impediment in the way of reestablishment of an order of things nearly akin to slavery, would then again be done away with.

Such was the condition of things in the late Confederate States shortly after the Civil War. In investigating it at the request of President Johnson, I honestly endeavored to see things as they were; I neglected no source of information open to me; I talked with all classes of people and improved every opportunity to observe with my own eyes. And when I reported to the President, I took care rather to understate than to overcolor my facts and conclusions, and as much as possible to let my authorities speak for themselves.

To recapitulate: The white people of the South were harassed by pressing necessities, and most of them in a troubled and

greatly excited state of mind. The emancipation of the slaves had destroyed the traditional labor system upon which they had depended. Free negro labor was still inconceivable to them. There were exceptions, but, as a rule, their ardent, and, in a certain sense, not unnatural, desire was to resist its introduction and to save or restore as much of the slave labor system as possible. The Government of the Union was in duty and honor bound to maintain the emancipation of the slaves, and to introduce free labor. The solution of such a problem would have been extremely difficult under any circumstances. It was in this case especially complicated by the partial failure of the Freedmen's Bureau, and still more by the decided encouragement given to the reactionary tendency prevailing among the Southern whites, by the attitude of President Johnson which permitted the Southern whites to expect that they would soon have the power to reestablish something similar to slave labor.

There was, no doubt, a general and sincere desire among the Northern people to restore the "States lately in rebellion" to their Constitutional functions as soon as this could be done with safety to the freedom of the emancipated slaves and the effective introduction of the free labor system in those States. The maintenance of the freedom of the emancipated blacks and the establishment of an order of things in which their rights would be safe were universally recognized as a binding duty.

Those in power, mindful of that duty, saw a clear alternative before them: either the "States lately in rebellion" had to be kept under military rule until the Southern whites would have so accustomed themselves to the new order of things that the rights of the freedmen and the development of free labor would no longer require military protection, or the freedmen had to be endowed with a certain measure of political power so that they might be enabled to protect themselves in the enjoyment of their rights.

As to the first horn of the dilemma, the continuation of military rule in the South was difficult and highly objectionable for several reasons. The troops still occupying the Southern States consisted largely of war volunteers, many of whom, since the real war was over, were anxious and claimed the right, to go home. But the

protection of the rights of the freedmen and the introduction of the free labor system required the presence of a great many garrisons to be scattered all over the Southern country, and therefore a large number of soldiers. Moreover, the maintenance of military government in the South for an indefinite time would have been extremely undesirable, even if the necessary number of soldiers could have been ever so easily procured—for the reason that military rule as such is on general principles in the highest degree uncongenial to the spirit of our free institutions; and for the additional reason that the exercise of extraordinary powers by military garrisons in a conquered country is very apt to bring forth grave abuses, and that garrison life of just that kind, under just such circumstances, is eminently calculated to exercise a very demoralizing influence upon soldiers, especially upon volunteer soldiers, after a victorious campaign. It seemed therefore highly expedient that the necessity of indefinitely continuing military rule in the South be obviated in some way.

On the other hand, to enable the freedmen to protect themselves by the exercise of a certain measure of political power, was a problem hardly less perplexing. This could be done only by putting into their hands the ballot as a defensive weapon. That the great mass of the negroes would not use the ballot intelligently and with conscientious care was indeed apprehended by every thoughtful person. That it would have been vastly preferable to introduce colored suffrage gradually, and perhaps dependent upon certain qualifications, if that had been practicable by Federal action, was also admitted by many, if not most, of those who were in favor of making the negro a voter. But while it was foreseen that the exercise of suffrage by the bulk of the negroes in the South might bring forth unwelcome results, it was thought that those results might in the long run prove not as deplorable as would be those to be expected from an indefinite continuation of military rule; that the Southern people might see fit to subject the suffrage in their States to suitable qualifications equally applicable to whites and blacks; that the negro voters might be guided by wise leadership; and finally that, whatever might happen, this escape from the perplexing

dilemma was after all the most in consonance with our principles of democratic government—a government the blessings of which cannot be had without the risk of its bringing forth concomitant troubles.

I am convinced that this statement fairly represents the line of reasoning prevalent among thinking men in the North who at that time favored negro suffrage. To judge from certain of their public utterances, it is now believed by many Southern men that negro suffrage was imposed upon the South from motives of hatred or vindictiveness. Nothing could be farther from the truth. There was indeed here and there some fierce language indulged in, the war passions not having completely subsided. It is also true that the reckless policy and the intemperate utterances of President Johnson had made the anti-slavery men in the country and the Republican majority in Congress suspect that their cause had been betrayed by the President, and that the most trenchant measures were necessary to baffle that treachery. And thus one of the most intricate problems of our history became involved in a passionate political fray, well apt to heat men's minds and to make many of them reckless of consequences. But I can confidently affirm—and I had at the time very large opportunities for personal observation—that the serious and influential men favoring negro suffrage, were not controlled by any feeling of hatred or vindictiveness but by the sober consideration that the legitimate results of the war—among them, in the first line, the abolition of slavery and the establishment of free labor in the South—were in very serious danger of being rendered practically inoperative, if not entirely annulled, by the reactionary movement in the South, and that the grant of the ballot to the negroes would be, all things considered, the most democratic as well as the most practicable means to thwart such a reaction.

It has since, in view of the fact that negro suffrage did not give good government to the South and did not secure the negro himself in the safe enjoyment of his rights, been asserted and widely accepted that the endowment of the recently liberated slaves with the suffrage was the worst mistake that could have been committed under the circumstances. I am far from denying that negro suffrage, as first exercised, brought on great scandals in the

State and municipal governments in the South, and that it did not succeed in securing the negro in his rights; but it must not be forgotten that negro suffrage was resorted to in a situation so complicated that whatever might have been done to solve the most pressing problems would have appeared a colossal mistake in the light of subsequent developments. Would it have been better to leave the "States lately in rebellion" immediately after the war entirely to themselves? No one well acquainted with the drift of things in the South at that period will have the slightest doubt that such a policy, in spite of the acceptance of the thirteenth amendment, would have resulted in the substantial re-enslavement of the freedmen, with incalculable troubles to follow. Would it have been better to keep the South under military rule until the free labor problem in the late slave States should have been satisfactorily solved? It is very questionable whether an indefinite continuation of military rule would not have resulted in abuses, and more or less permanent evils, so great that the latter-day critic might, quite pertinently, ask: "Why did not the statesmen of those times obviate the necessity of continuing military rule by granting to the freedmen the necessary political power to protect themselves?"

It should be remembered that so tremendous a social revolution as the sudden transformation of almost the whole laboring force of a large country from slaves into free men could never have been effected quite smoothly without producing hot conflicts of antagonistic interests and feelings, and without giving birth to problems seeming for a time almost impossible of solution. The troubles brought upon us by so sweeping a change as the sudden abolition of slavery were, after all, the common fate of humanity under like circumstances. It is only a question of more or less, and we have, perhaps, not more than our inevitable share.

The introduction of negro suffrage in the South took place under peculiarly unfavorable circumstances. The evils apt to follow the injection of such a mass of ignorance as an active element into the body politic might have been greatly mitigated had the colored voters fallen under conscientious and wise leadership. No greater misfortune could have happened than that

this leadership was actually seized in several Southern States by unscrupulous adventurers, most of whom had come from the North to exploit the confusion prevailing in the Southern country for their personal profit, while also some Southern men of similar character and purpose followed their example. I do not, indeed, mean to say that all the Republican leaders in the South belonged to that class, for there were very honorable and patriotic men among them. But in some of the States the demagogues and rascals were the most successful in pressing to the front and in obtaining the control of affairs. Then followed the so-called carpet-bag governments—a mimicry of legislation by negroes, some of whom were moderately educated, while some were mere plantation hands, led by a set of cunning rogues who were bent upon filling their pockets quickly. It is difficult to exaggerate the extravagances, corrupt practices and downright robberies perpetrated under those governments.

That the Southern whites, especially those who had any material stake in their communities, should not have been willing long to tolerate such shameful and ruinous misrule, is not at all surprising. But that statesmen of good character and high position in the National Government should have been willing systematically to sustain that misrule, is a fact which the historian will find it difficult to explain, unless he accepts the theory that selfish party spirit will sometimes seduce public men in approving, or even doing, on the political field, things from which they would shrink with disgust in private life. It is true that the opposition to the carpet-bag governments in the South took a lawless character and brought forth a large number of bloody outrages. But while duly striving to repress those outrages, the Administration and the Republican majority in Congress should not have forgotten that the provocation for the violent opposition to carpet-bag misrule was such as would hardly have been withstood by any spirited people on earth, and that the disorder could not possibly be allayed so long as that rapacious misrule continued by its excesses to provoke it. But party spirit did seem to forget this. Expecting to keep the Southern States under Republican control and thus to fortify the Republican majorities

in Congress and in the Electoral College, the party leaders in power insisted upon supporting the carpet-bag governments, even by military interference, to an extent now hardly credible, and upon continuing the system of political disabilities by which those who had occupied certain positions under the Confederate Government were excluded from the suffrage as well as from eligibility to office, while the negro was endowed with the ballot and made eligible to political positions. It is hardly necessary to say to-day that the true policy in the public interest would have been to accompany the introduction of negro suffrage with a general amnesty admitting to political activity and position that element which no doubt represented the best intelligence of the South, and at that time, also, the most conciliatory impulses. It is doubtful whether excessive party spirit has ever in our history played a more mischievous part than it did in this instance.

When, in 1877, the Hayes administration came into power, the controlling influence of that party spirit was at an end. The Administration called some of the most prominent and highly respected Southern leaders into conference to secure their influence for the protection of the emancipated negroes in the enjoyment of their rights, while the countenance of the national authority was withdrawn from the carpet-bag governments. The Southern leaders, thus consulted, promised their best endeavors, whereupon the Federal troops were removed from the South and the carpet-bag governments quickly disappeared one after another. I have no doubt the Southern leaders in question had given their promise in perfect good faith, and have honestly exerted themselves to stem in their respective States the movements hostile to the rights of the freedmen. But their influence was not strong enough to resist the prevailing current. Indeed, the bloody outrages ceased in a great measure. But the efforts to overcome or nullify the negro vote by illegitimate means did not cease. The rudest form of force was supplanted by artifice. Tissue ballots, puzzling arrangements of the ballot boxes, and all possible devices human ingenuity can invent were resorted to for this purpose, and with great success.

Early in 1885, after the election of Mr. Cleveland to the Presidency, I visited the

South again. The negroes had been told, and very many of them had believed it, that the election of a Democratic President would be immediately followed by the restoration of slavery. When month after month had passed after the dreaded event without any startling commotion of that kind, the apprehension subsided and some intelligent colored men conceived the idea that it would be the best policy for their race in the South to divide the colored vote between the two political parties and thus to win friends and protectors on both sides. At the same time a fresh breeze of industrial enterprise and development was blowing in the South, encouraging the hope that the growing up of new economic interests would bring forth new political alignments, and thus gradually loosen the so far rigid adherence of the Southern whites to one party organization. This would, of course, have facilitated the division of the negro vote. By such agencies many troubles in the internal condition of the South might have been allayed and the way to a final solution of the puzzling and dangerous problem prepared, had not the race-antipathy overshadowed almost all political thought among the Southern whites. With a majority of them—apparently a large majority—the desire not merely to control or reduce in strength, but entirely to suppress the colored vote, seemed to overrule every other consideration, and to this end, they finally resorted to the adoption of provisions in some of their State Constitutions by which in various indirect ways the grant of the suffrage to the negro was to be made substantially inoperative, without in terms directly disfranchising the negro as such altogether. The colored people were thus effectively stripped of the political power by the exercise of which they had been expected to protect their own rights.

That the suppression of the negro franchise by direct or indirect means is in contravention of the spirit and intent of the fifteenth amendment to the Constitution of the United States hardly admits of doubt. The evident intent of the Constitution is that the colored people shall have the right of suffrage on an equal footing with the white people. The intent of the provisions of the State Constitutions in question, as avowed by many Southern men, is that the colored people shall not vote.

However plausibly it may be demonstrated by ingenious argument that the provisions in the State Constitutions are not in conflict with the National Constitution, or that, if they were, their purpose could not be effectively thwarted by judicial decisions—yet it remains true that by many, if not by all, of their authors they were expressly designed to defeat the universally known and recognized intent of a provision of the National Constitution.

Can it be said by way of moral justification that the colored people have deserved to be deprived of their rights as a punishment for something they have done? It is an undisputed matter of history that they came to this country not of their own volition, that they were not intruders, but that they were brought here by force to serve the selfishness of white men; that they did such service as slaves patiently and submissively for two and a half centuries; that even during a war which was waged, incidentally if not directly, for their deliverance, a large majority of them faithfully continued to serve their masters while these were fighting to keep them in slavery; that they were emancipated, not by any insurrectionary act of theirs, but by the act of the government; that when, after their emancipation, they confronted their old masters as free men, they did not, so far as known, commit a single act of vengeance for cruelties they may have suffered while in slavery; that the right of suffrage was given to them, not in obedience to any irresistible urgency on their part, but by the national power wielded by white men, to enable the emancipated colored people to protect their own rights; and that when their exercise of the suffrage brought forth in some States foolish extravagances and corrupt government it was again principally owing to the leadership of white men, who worked themselves into their confidence and, for their own profit, led them astray.

The only plausible reason given for that curtailment of their rights is that it is not in the interest of the Southern whites to permit the blacks to vote. I will not discuss here the moral aspect of the question, whether "A" may deprive "B" of his rights if "A" thinks it in his own interest to do so, and the further question, whether the general admission of such a principle would not banish justice from the

earth and eventually carry human society back into barbarism. I will rather discuss the question whether under existing circumstances it would really be the true interest of the Southern whites generally to disfranchise the colored people.

Here I encounter the objection that this is not a question for me, or any other Northern man, to discuss; that the Southern whites understand their own interests best, and that, more especially, they know best how to deal with the negro. I cannot accept this without serious qualification. Undoubtedly there are in the South men who understand their own and their neighbors' interests best; but there are others who do not understand those interests at all, and whose opinions in several important historic instances have overruled the opinions of those who did. I remember cases in which a large and controlling majority of the Southern whites made grievous mistakes as to the true interests of the South—cases in which they would have acted most wisely had they accepted the advice of well-meaning outsiders, whom, in the excitement of the moment, they repelled as impudently intrusive critics, and whom they even put down as their enemies. I have seen the time when it was the belief of an apparently overwhelming majority of the Southern whites that the "peculiar institution" of slavery was an economic, moral, social, and political blessing, while in fact, slavery as the predominant interest, making everything else subordinate to itself, weighed down, like an incubus, industry, commercial enterprise, popular education—everything that constitutes progressive civilization. I remember the time when an apparently irresistible sentiment drove the Southern whites into a reckless war for the purpose of founding an independent empire on the corner-stone of slavery, while sober judgment would have told them that their resources were unequal to the task, and that, even if they had proved themselves equal, an empire so founded could not possibly have stood against the civilization of the age. I have heard them, after the war, insist, with an almost unanimous voice, that they knew the negro better than anybody else did and that "the negro would not work without physical compulsion." Subsequent developments have proved that in this respect their judgment was glaringly

at fault; and here is that proof: In 1860 the cotton crop, raised by slave labor under the system of "physical compulsion," was 4,861,000 bales. In 1898 the cotton crop was 11,216,000 bales, and in 1899, 11,256,000 bales. A portion of these crops was, no doubt, cultivated by whites. But it will hardly be denied that by far the larger part was raised by negro labor, while a considerable portion of the colored people did not work on cotton plantations; and the crops in 1898 and 1899 were raised while the negro, as a rule, did not labor under physical compulsion. It is thus conclusively demonstrated by undisputed fact that the Southern whites who after the close of the war almost unanimously insisted that the "negro would not work without physical compulsion," were signally wrong as to what means must be used "to make the negro work." The list of such mistakes of judgment might be largely extended. After such proofs of the fallibility of the Southern mind on vital points as to the interest of the South, and the negro question in particular, Northern men may be pardoned if they hesitate to accept the doctrine that the Southern whites, as a rule "know all about" that problem, that their treatment of it stands above criticism, and that, therefore, Northern men should abstain from discussing the question whether it would really be the true interest of the Southern whites under present circumstances to disfranchise the colored people generally. We may, therefore, fairly discuss the matter, especially as it has a national bearing.

Negro suffrage is plausibly objected to on the ground that the great bulk of the colored population of the South are very ignorant. This is true. But the same is true of a large portion of the white population. If the suffrage is dangerous in the hands of certain voters on account of their ignorance, it is as dangerous in the hands of ignorant whites as in the hands of ignorant blacks. To remedy this, two things might be done: to establish an educational test for admission to the suffrage, excluding illiterates; and, secondly, to provide for systems of public instruction so as gradually to do away with illiteracy, subjecting whites and blacks alike to the same restrictions and opening to them the same opportunities. This would be easily assented to by the Southern whites if the real or the

principal objection to negro suffrage consisted in the ignorance of the black men. It is also said "that education unfits the negro for work." This is in so far true as it makes many negroes unwilling to devote themselves to the ordinary plantation labor, encouraging them to look for work more congenial to their abilities and tastes, and sometimes even seducing them to live upon their wits without work. But the same, then, is true in regard to white men. The increasing disinclination of young white persons to walk behind the plow or to attend to the milking of cows in the solitude of farm life, and the spreading among them of the desire to enjoy a pleasanter existence and to do easier and finer work in the cities, which we observe all around us in the North, with no little anxiety as to what it may at last lead to, is no doubt largely attributable to the natural effects of popular education. But if here, at the North, the question were asked whether for this reason popular education should be restricted to the end of increasing the fitness and taste for farm work among our people, there would hardly be an audible voice of assent.

That the evil of ignorance as an active element on the political field presents a more serious and complicated problem in the South than in the North cannot be denied, for the mass of ignorance precipitated into the body politic by the enfranchisement of the blacks is so much greater there than here. But most significant and of evil augury is the fact that with many of the Southern whites a well-educated colored voter is as objectionable as an ignorant one, or even more objectionable, simply on account of his color. It is therefore not mere dread of ignorance in the voting body that arouses the Southern whites against the colored voters. It is race-antagonism, and that race-antagonism presents a problem more complicated and perplexing than most others, because it is apt to be unreasoning. It creates violent impulses which refuse to be argued with. One of the worst effects of the predominance of the slavery interest produced upon the public mind in the old days consisted in the despotic virulence with which in the South it suppressed the freedom of inquiry and discussion with regard to a matter which in the highest degree concerned the welfare of the Southern people. The expression of any opinion

hostile to slavery was fiercely resented as an attack upon an institution which must not be touched, a sort of sacrilegious attempt to subvert the very foundations of Southern society. Had the same freedom of inquiry and discussion prevailed in the South which prevailed in other parts of the country, the Civil War would probably have been prevented. The race-antipathy now heating the Southern mind threatens again to curtail the freedom of inquiry and discussion there—perhaps not to the same extent, but sufficiently to produce infinite mischief by preventing an open-minded consideration of one of the most important interests.

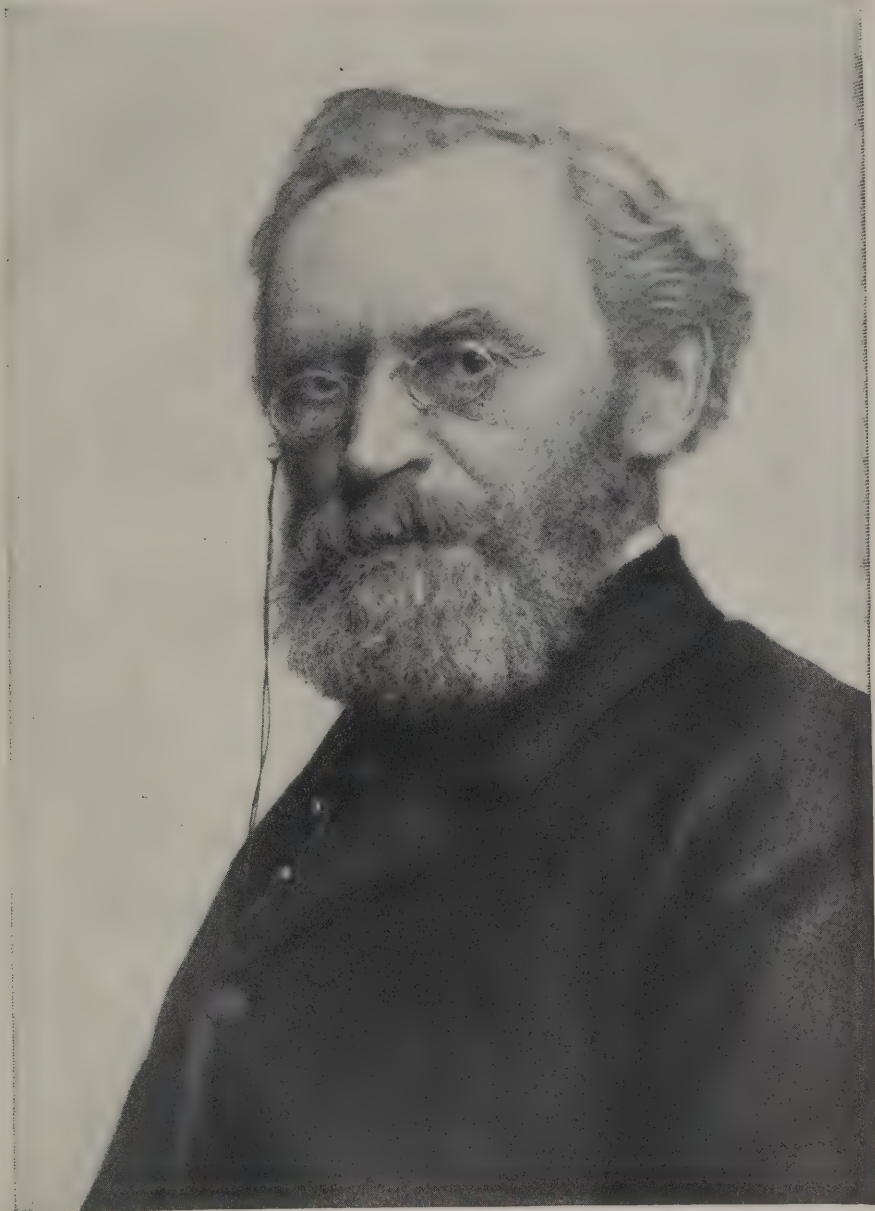
To those who, among the passionate cries of the moment, have preserved the pride of independent opinion, the following view of the present situation may commend itself for serious reflection: The colored people, originally brought here by force, are here to stay. The scheme to transport them back to Africa is absolutely idle. If adopted, its execution would be found practically impossible. To transport ten millions of negroes across the sea would require ten thousand voyages of ships carrying one thousand passengers each. The bulk of the colored population will remain in the South, where the climate is more congenial to them and where they can more profitably devote themselves to productive work. It would be a great economic embarrassment to the South if that working force disappeared from its fields. Under the fundamental law of the country they are no longer slaves, but free men. They have the aspirations of free men. According to the intent of the same fundamental law, they are also citizens and voters. Whether it would or would not have been wiser to emancipate them gradually and to withhold the right of voting from them, or to introduce them by degrees into the body of voters, is no longer the question. Regrettable as this may be, we have to face actual circumstances. The fact we have to deal with is that by the recognized intent of the National Constitution they are as much entitled to the right of suffrage as white men are. It has been suggested that the fourteenth and fifteenth amendments of the National Constitution, embodying the provisions referred to, be done away with by further amendment; but leaving aside the question whether as a

matter of right this should be done, I doubt whether a single well-informed man can be found in the country who thinks it possible that the required three-fourths of the States will ever consent to such a repeal. To discuss the visionary colonization scheme or the equally impossible repeal of the fourteenth and fifteenth amendments means, therefore, not only to squander time and breath, but to divert the popular mind from the true problem and from the real possibilities of its solution. It must, to start with, be taken as a certainty that the negroes will stay here and that the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth amendments will stand, and if they are to be made inoperative at all, it must be by means of a sort of tricky stratagem in flagrant violation of the spirit of the Constitution. Such stratagems are usually not approved by conscientious persons, and they cannot be resorted to by a people without a mischievous lowering of the standard of public morals and an impairment of self-respect.

This is evidently a political and social condition which cannot continue to exist without constant and most unwholesome irritation and restlessness. Such as it is, it cannot possibly be permanent. The colored people will be incessantly disturbed by the feeling that they are unjustly deprived of their legal rights and have become the victims of tyrannical oppression. The most thoughtful and self-respecting among the whites will be ashamed of that state of things, and dissatisfied with themselves for tolerating it. The reckless among the white population, the element most subject to the passions fomented and stirred by a race-antipathy, and most responsive to the catch-phrases of the demagogue, will understand it as a justification of all the things done to put down the negro, and as an incitement to further steps along the same line.

And here is the crucial point: *There will be a movement either in the direction of reducing the negroes to a permanent condition of serfdom—the condition of the mere plantation hand, “alongside of the mule,” practically without any rights of citizenship—or a movement in the direction of recognizing him as a citizen in the true sense of the term. One or the other will prevail.*

That there are in the South strenuous advocates of the establishment of some sort of semi-slavery cannot be denied.



Photograph by Hollinger.

*Very sincerely yours
C. Schurz*

*"Can the South Solve the Negro Problem?"
By CARL SCHURZ. See page 259.*

*McClures
1904*

Governor Vardaman, of Mississippi, is their representative and most logical statesman. His extreme utterances are greeted by many as the bugle-blasts of a great leader. We constantly read articles in Southern newspapers and reports of public speeches made by Southern men which bear a striking resemblance to the pro-slavery arguments I remember to have heard before the Civil War, and they are brought forth with the same passionate heat and dogmatic assurance to which we were then accustomed—the same assertion of the negro's predestination for serfdom; the same certainty that he will not work without "physical compulsion"; the same contemptuous rejection of negro education as a thing that will only unfit him for work; the same prediction that the elevation of the negro will be the degradation of the whites; the same angry demand that any advocacy of the negro's rights should be put down in the South as an attack upon the safety of Southern society, and as treason to the Southern cause. I invite those who indulge in that sort of speech to consider what the success of their endeavors would lead to.

In the first place, they should not forget that to keep a race in slavery that had been in that condition for many generations, as was done before the Civil War, is one thing, comparatively easy; but that to reduce that race again to slavery, or something like it, after it has been free for half a century, is quite another thing—nobody knows how difficult and dangerous.

In the second place, they should not forget that the slavery question of old was not merely one of morals and human rights, but that it had a most important bearing upon the character of democratic government as well as upon economic interests and general progress and prosperity. Some of us remember vividly how, in ante bellum days, the Southern people smarted under the feeling of their commercial and industrial inferiority to the North; how they held conventions and conferences to consult about the means by which they might be relieved of their "abject and disgraceful dependence"—about factories to be built on Southern soil, about commercial connections to be established with the outside world, about steamships to run between Southern ports and those of foreign countries, and so on, and how,

in spite of all those schemes and spasmodic efforts, the inferiority of the South remained substantially the same. The main reason of the failure was that the Southern people would not touch the principal cause of their inferiority. Above all else they idolized and cared for their "peculiar institution" of slavery. They were nervously anxious to avoid doing or even saying anything that might directly or indirectly endanger that "peculiar institution," and it was this nervous anxiety which made them suspicious of every new idea or aspiration that might in some direct or indirect way have shaken the social and political order based upon slavery—especially suspicious of anything apt, directly or indirectly, to make the laboring force of the country more intelligent and thereby more ambitious. Nothing can have a more benumbing effect upon the active energies of a people than such a tendency. I am far from saying that the South would have rivaled the North in productive activity and progress had slavery not existed. Climatic conditions would have prevented that; but surely the difference between the two sections of the country would have been far less. We have heard much from Southern men since the close of the Civil War of the substantial benefits the abolition of slavery has conferred upon the South—of the impetus it has given to the spirit of enterprise in the opening and the exploitation of natural resources, the building up of industries, the enlargement of means of communication and the development of other agencies of civilization. All this is recognized to be owing to the removal—the partial removal at least—of the incubus of that "peculiar institution" which stupefied everything. And now the reactionists are striving again to burden the Southern people with another "peculiar institution," closely akin to its predecessor in character, as it will be in its inevitable effects if fully adopted by the Southern people—that is, if the bulk of the laboring class is again to be kept in stupid subjection, without the hope of advancement and without the ambition of progress. For, as the old pro-slavery man was on principle hostile to general negro education, so the present advocate of semi-slavery is perfectly logical in his contempt for the general instruction of the colored people and in his desire to do away with the negro

school. What the reactionist really wants is a negro just fit for the task of a plantation hand and for little, if anything, more, and with no ambition for anything beyond. Therefore, quite logically, the reactionist abhors the educated negro. In fact the political or social recognition of the educated negro is especially objectionable to him for the simple reason that it would be an encouragement of higher aspirations among the colored people generally. The reactionist wishes to keep the colored people, that is, the great mass of the laboring force in the South, as ignorant as possible, to the end of keeping it as submissive and obedient as possible. As formerly the people of the South were the slaves of slavery, so they are now to be made the victims of their failure to abolish slavery altogether.

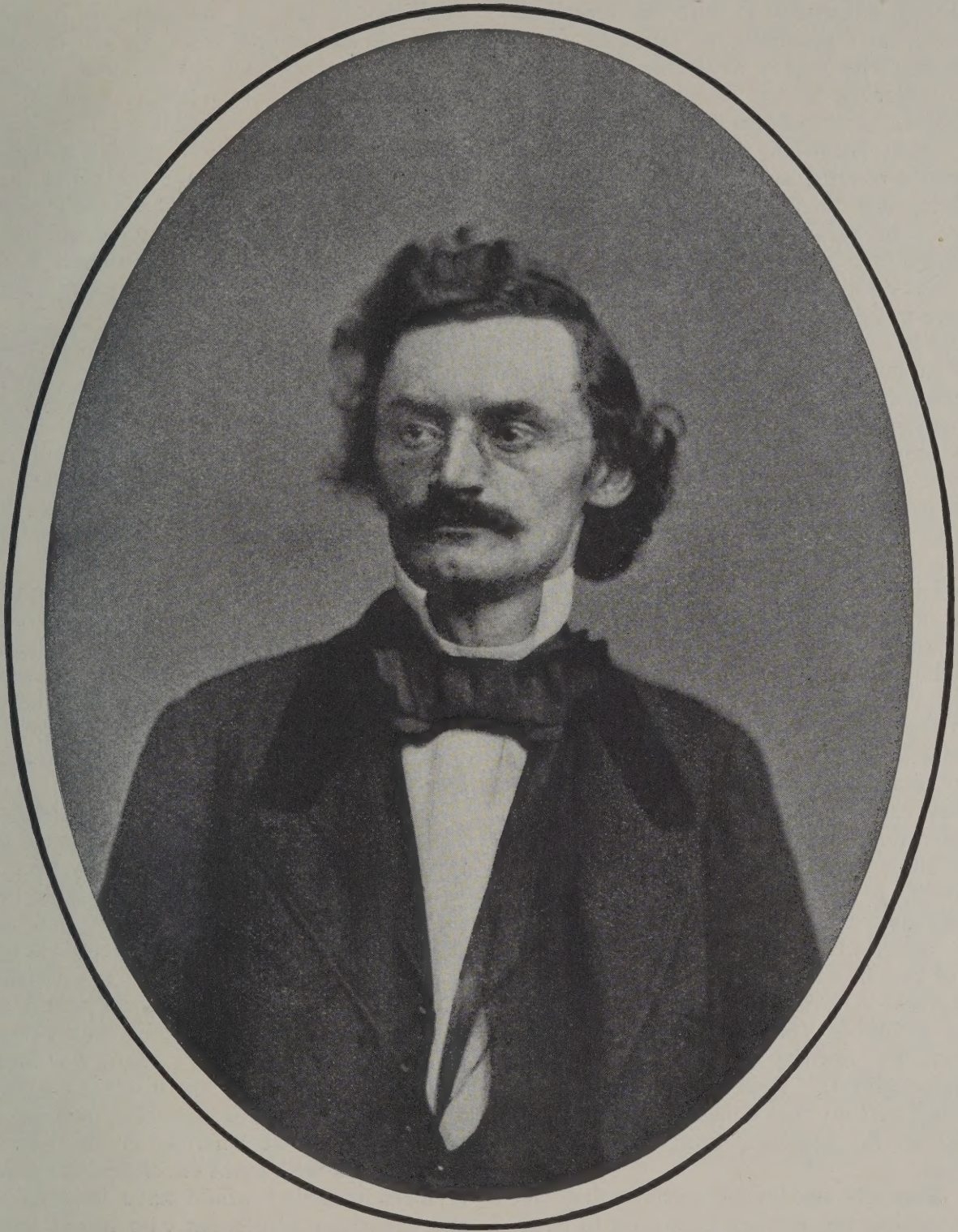
And now imagine the moral, intellectual and economic condition of a community whose principal and most anxious—I might say hysteric—care is the solution of the paramount problem “how to keep the nigger down”—that is, to reduce a large part of its laboring population to stolid brutishness—and that community in competition with other communities all around which are energetically intent upon lifting up their laboring forces to the highest attainable degree of intelligence, ambition, and efficiency.

This is not all. The reactionist fiercely insists that the South “must be let alone.” in dealing with the negro. This was the cry of the pro-slavery men of the old ante bellum time. But the American people outside of the South took a lively interest in the matter, and finally the South was not left alone. If the reactionists should now succeed in reestablishing something like slavery in the shape of peonage or any other shape, they can hardly hope to be “let alone.” Although there is at present little inclination among the people of the North to meddle politically with Southern difficulties, they will hardly witness such a relapse into the vicious old system with indifference. They will hardly accept that doctrine of non-intervention which insists, as Abraham Lincoln expressed it, “that when A makes B his slave, C shall not interfere.” I think I risk little in predicting that the reactionists are in this respect preparing new trouble for the South, and that only their failure can prevent that trouble.

Thus it may be said without exaggeration that by striving to keep up in the Southern States a condition of things which cannot fail to bring forth constant irritation and unrest; which threatens to burden the South with another “peculiar institution” by making the bulk of its laboring force again a clog to progressive development—and to put the South once more in a position provokingly offensive to the moral sense and the enlightened spirit of the world outside—the reactionists are the worst enemies the Southern people have to fear.

As to the outlook, there are signs pointing in different ways. The applause called forth by such virulent pronouncements as those by Governor Vardaman, and the growls with which some Southern newspapers and agitators receive the united efforts of high-minded Southern and Northern men to advance education in the Southern States among both races, as well as the political appeals made to a reckless race-prejudice, are evidence that the reactionary spirit is a strong power with many Southern people. How far that spirit may go in its practical ventures was shown in the Alabama peonage cases, which disclosed a degree of unscrupulous greed, and an atrocious disregard of the most elementary principles of justice and humanity. And what has been proven creates the apprehension that there is still more of the same kind behind.

On the other hand, the fact that the united efforts for education in the South, which I mentioned, are heartily and effectively supported not only by a large number of Southern men of high standing in society, but by some in important political office in the Southern States, and by a large portion of the Southern press; and the further fact that the crimes committed in the peonage cases were disclosed by Southern officers of the law, that the indictments were found by Southern grand juries, that verdicts of guilty were pronounced by Southern petit juries, that sentence was passed by a Southern judge in language the dignity and moral feeling of which could hardly have been more elevated, and that the exposure of those crimes evoked among the people of the South many demonstrations of righteous wrath at such villainies—all these things and others of the same kind are symptoms



CARL SCHURZ

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN IN 1865, WHEN MR. SCHURZ, AT
PRESIDENT JOHNSON'S REQUEST, MADE A TOUR OF
INVESTIGATION THROUGH THE SOUTH

of moral forces at work which, if well organized and directed, will be strong enough effectually to curb the reactionary spirit, and gradually to establish in the South, with regard to the negro problem, an order of things founded on right and justice, delivering Southern society of the constant irritations and alarms springing from wrongful and untenable conditions, giving it a much needed rest in the assurances of righteousness, and animating it with a new spirit of progress.

No doubt the most essential work will have to be done in and by the South itself. And it can be. There are in the South a great many enlightened and high-minded men and women eminently fit for it. Let them get together and organize for the task of preparing the public mind in the South by a systematic campaign of education, for a solution of the problem in harmony with our free institutions. It may be a long and arduous campaign for them, but certainly a patriotic, meritorious, and hopeful one. They will have to fight traditional notions and prejudices of extraordinary stubbornness, but they will also have generous impulses and sound common sense to appeal to. They will not indulge in the delusion that they can ignore or altogether obliterate the existing race-antipathy, but they can effectively combat every effort to cultivate and inflame it. They will be able to show that it is the interest of the South, as it is that of the North, not to degrade the laboring force, but to elevate it by making it more intelligent and capable, and that if we mean thus to elevate it and to make it more efficient, we must not kill its ambitions, but stimulate those ambitions by opening to them all possible opportunities. Their example will demonstrate that no man debases himself by lifting up his neighbor from ever so low a level.

They will also be able to show that, even supposing the average negro not to be able to reach the level of the average white man, the negro may reach a much higher level than he now occupies, and that, for his own good as well as the good of society, he should be brought up to as high a level as he can reach; and further, that the negro race has not only, since emancipation, accumulated an astonishing amount of property — nearly \$800,000,000 worth in farms, houses, and various business

establishments — but has also produced not a few eminent men, eminent in literature, in medicine, in law, in mathematics, in theology, in educational work, in art, in mechanics — exceptional colored men, to be sure, but eminent men are exceptional in any race — who have achieved their successes under conditions so difficult and disheartening as to encourage the belief that they might have accomplished much more, and that many more such men would have come forth, had their environment been more just and the opportunities more favorable.

They would be able to banish the preposterous bugbear of “social equality” which frightens so many otherwise sensible persons, in spite of the evident truth of Abraham Lincoln’s famous saying that if he respected and advocated the just rights of the black man it did not follow that he must therefore take a black woman for his wife.

They might at the same time puncture those curious exaggerations of that dread of “social equality” which exhibit themselves in such childish follies as the attempt to make a heroine out of a silly hotel chambermaid who thought she did a proud thing in refusing to make Booker T. Washington’s bed.

They may expose to the proper pathological light the hysterics which seemed to unsettle the minds of a great many people when the President greeted at his table the same distinguished citizen, who had already been received by Queen Victoria at tea at Windsor Castle, and who is known and admired throughout the civilized world as a man of extraordinary merit, but whose presence at the President’s board was frantically denounced as an insult to every white citizen of this republic, and as a dangerous blow at American civilization.

They may with great effect describe how civilized mankind would have laughed at the American gentleman who might have refused to sit at table with Alexander Dumas, the elder, one of the greatest novelists of all ages and a most charming conversationalist and companion, for the reason that Dumas’ grandmother had been a negress and Dumas himself must therefore be sternly excluded from polite society as a “nigger.”

To the lofty people who, for fear of compromising their own dignity, scorn to

address a colored man as Mr. or a colored woman as Mrs. or Miss, they would give something to think by reminding them of the stateliest gentleman ever produced by America, a man universally revered, a Virginian, who, when a negress, and a slave, too, had dedicated to him some complimentary verses, wrote her an elaborate and gravely polite letter of thanks, addressing her as "Miss Phyllis" and subscribing himself "with great respect, your obedient humble servant, George Washington."

They will appeal to Southern chivalry, a sentiment which does not consist merely in the impulse to rush with knightly ardor to the rescue of well-born ladies in distress, but rather in a constant readiness to embrace the cause of right and justice in behalf of the lowliest as well as the highest, in defense of the weak against the strong, and this all the more willingly as the lowliest stand most in need of knightly help; and as in the service of justice the spirit of chivalry will shine all the more brightly, the harder the task and the more unselfish the effort.

In this way such a body of high-minded and enlightened Southerners may gradually succeed in convincing even many of the most prejudiced of their people, that white ignorance and lawlessness are just as bad and dangerous as black ignorance and lawlessness; that black patriotism, integrity, ability, industry, usefulness, good citizenship, and public spirit are just as good and as much entitled to respect and reward as capabilities and virtues of the same name among whites; that the rights of the white man under the Constitution are no more sacred than those of the black man; that neither white nor black can override the rights of the other without eventually endangering his own; and that the negro question can finally be settled so

as to stay settled only on the basis of the fundamental law of the land as it stands, by fair observance of that law and not by any tricky circumvention of it. Such a campaign for truth and justice, carried on by the high-minded and enlightened Southerners without any party spirit — rather favoring the view that whites as well as blacks should divide their votes according to their inclinations between different political parties — will promise the desired result in the same measure as it is carried on with gentle, patient, and persuasive dignity, but also with that unflinching courage which is, above all things, needed to assert that most important freedom: — the freedom of inquiry and discussion against traditional and deep-rooted prejudice — a courage which can be daunted neither by the hootings of the mob nor by the supercilious jeers of fashionable society, but goes steadily on doing its work with indomitable tenacity of purpose.

These suggestions are submitted for candid consideration, as pointing out one of the ways in which the South may solve the most difficult of her problems entirely by her own efforts; and thus reach the only solution that will stand in accord with the fundamental principles of democratic government.

Will it be said that what I offer is more a diagnosis than a definite remedy? It may appear so. But this is one of the problems which defy complete solution and can only be rendered less troublesome. It can certainly not be quickly and conclusively solved by drastic legislative treatment, which might rather prove apt to irritate than to cure. What is done by legislation can usually be undone by legislation, and is therefore liable to become subject to the chances of party warfare. The slow process of propitiating public sentiment, while trying our patience, promises after all the most durable results.





“A PICKAXE, AND A SPADE, A SPADE”

BY

EDEN PHILLPOTTS

ILLUSTRATED BY HOWARD GILES

I

WHEN the “Ring o’ Bells” came to be masterless, an obscure maiden, who had dwelt there since Mrs. Merle’s demise, found herself possessor of all the money, for Miser Merle left no will. Minnie Merle was his orphaned niece, and when the old man’s unhappy partner shuffled off, he had be-thought him of this girl. As a relation lacking friends or position she would come without wages. So from the position of domestic servant in a Plymouth tradesman’s family at three pounds a year, Minnie was

exalted to be the handmaid of Miser Merle without remuneration of any kind.

“A man’s own flesh and blood,” he said, “will understand. I don’t want to poison your regard for me with money or reduce you to the level of a hireling. You are my niece; you and Nicholas Merle, in the North Country, are all the kindred left to me, now that my wife has been taken.”

The old man never trusted his niece again after a day upon which he caught her helping hungry tramps to bread and cheese, because Minnie’s idea of a pennyworth was far more liberal than Mr. Merle’s; but she